

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 AID-20 ACDA-19 DPW-01 EB-11 COME-00

AGR-20 SNM-02 FEA-02 SAJ-01 NIC-01 EUR-25 IO-14

TRSE-00 IGA-02 DRC-01 /212 W
----- 072480

R 240842Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1078

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL BIEN HOU

AMCONSUL CAN THO

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

USDEL JEC PARIS

UNCLAS SAIGON 01045

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, PINT, VS

SUB: PRESIDENT THIEU'S MESSAGE TO THE NATION ON THE OCCASION OF TET

1. WE WISH TO DRAW ADDRESSEES' ATTENTION TO THE TEXT OF PRESIDENT THIEU'S SPEECH TO THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AT TET, CARRIED BY FBIS UNDER S230640 PLUS FOUR ADDS.

2. THE SPEECH AMOUNTS TO A STATE-OF-THE-NATION ADDRESS AS THE NEW LUNAR YEAR BEGINS. AMONG THE SIGNIFICANT ITEMS ARE THE FOLLOWING:

(A) REITERATING WHAT HE SAID IN A JAN 4 SPEECH AT CAN THO IN THE DELTA, PRESIDENT THIEU SAID THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE ALREADY STARTED A GENERAL OFFENSIVE, BUT THAT VIGILANCE BY THE RVN'S FORCES HAS SUCCESS-

FULLY REDUCED THE OFFENSIVE'S INTENSITY. HOWEVER, NORTH VIETNAM "WILL
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NOT RENOUNCE ITS AGGRESSIVE DESIGNS" AND IS AWAITING ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY

TO ATTACK "IN THE FIRST MONTHS OF 1974".

(B) THE PRESIDENT REVEALED THAT THE COMMUNISTS A FEW DAYS EARLIER AT LA CELLE-ST CLOUD HAD REJECTED ANOTHER GVN PROPOSAL FOR A GENERAL ELECTION. THE GVN HAD PROPOSED AN ELECTION TO BE HELD JULY 20, 1974, EXACTLY TWENTY YEARS AFTER THE PARTITIONING OF VIETNAM.

(C) ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF COMMUNIST INTRANSIGENCE HE CITED IN THE "PRG" REFUSAL IN THE TWO PARTY JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION TO RESPOND TO A GVN OFFER TO RESUME THE EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS AT TET; AND, "EVEN WORSE, THE COMMUNISTS HAVE ALSO REJECTED OUR SIDE'S PROPOSAL FOR A UNILATERAL RETURN OF A NUMBER OF COMMUNIST PRISONERS."

(D) THE PRESIDENT MENTIONED FOUR MAJOR TASKS FOR 1974: STRENGTHENING TERRITORIAL SECURITY (INCLUDING THE "TOTAL ELIMINATION" OF THE COMMUNIST INFRASTRUCTURE), BOOSTING PRODUCTION (ESPECIALLY AGRICULTURE), IMPROVING THE GOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY (IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE REVOLUTION), AND STRENGTHENING SOCIETY. THE LAST ITEM INCLUDES AN ATTACK ON CORRUPTION, "HOOLIGANISM," AND THE NARCOTICS TRADE.

(E) THIEU ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE COUNTRY FACES ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES, WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED CHIEFLY TO THE CONTINUING COMMUNIST THREAT, TO THE DECLINE IN FOREIGN AID, INFLATION, WORLD MONETARY PROBLEMS, AND THE ENERGY CRISIS.

(F) THE PRESIDENT SPOKE AT SOME LENGTH ABOUT THE RECENT CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS. HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE AMENDMENT CONCERNING

THE PRESIDENTIAL TERM COULD CREATE "MISUNDERSTANDINGS," AND MIGHT BE DISTORTED WITH THE CRUEL INTENT TO CREATE CONFUSION IN THE MINDS OF THE MASSES." HE ASSERTED: "I WOULD LIKE FRANKLY TO TELL YOU THAT 'CAN RUN FOR RE-ELECTION' DOES NOT MEAN THAT I AND THE VICE PRESIDENT WILL RUN FOR RE-ELECTION, NOR DOES THIS MEAN THAT WE WILL NATURALLY BE RE-ELECTED." HE OBSERVED "WHICH CANDIDATES WILL BE ELECTED WILL DEPEND ON THE DECISION OF THE ENTIRE PEOPLE." HE NOTED THAT THE AMENDMENTS HAD BEEN DULY AND CONSTITUTIONALLY PASSED BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY "BY MORE THAN TWO THIRDS OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ASSEMBLYMEN, BY 153 DEPUTIES AND SENATORS". THIS WAS A MATTER WITHIN THE COMPETENCE OF THE ASSEMBLY, WHICH HAD ACTED IN WHAT IT THOUGHT THE BEST INTEREST OF THE NATION. HE ASSERTED THAT HE

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HAS NOT MADE A DECISION ABOUT RUNNING AGAIN, AND ASKED HIS FELLOW COUNTRYMEN "PLEASE DO NOT MISUNDERSTAND ME AND THINK THAT I AM GREEDY FOR POWER AND POSITION." THE PRESIDENT STATED THAT "WHEN THE COUNTRY RETURNS TO PEACE, I WILL RETURN TO THE LIFE OF A PEACEFUL CITIZEN IN A PEACEFUL COUNTRY." IN THE MEANTIME, HE PROMISED, HE WOULD WORK FOR THE RESTORATION OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY AND WOULD NOT SPEND HIS NEXT TWO YEARS IN OFFICE WORRYING ABOUT HOW TO GET RE-ELECTED IN 1975.

3. PRESIDENT THIEU DID NOT MENTION THE RECENT CLASH WITH THE PRC
OVER THE PARACEL ISLANDS IN HIS TET MESSAGE TO THE NATION.
MARTIN

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